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Shakespeare on Thanksgiving

Over the last eight years, I have looked forward to the day after Thanksgiving...not Black Friday to launch the Christmas shopping season, but the [National Day of Listening](#) established by StoryCorps that encourages us to share and record stories about loved ones through interviews. I have been inspired by the experiences and acts of ordinary people during times of triumph and trial that give voice to the vastness of the human spirit.

This Thanksgiving will shine light on the growing numbers among us who hunger for food. Yet often ignored are the many who hunger to be seen and to be heard and to be accepted. I have listened to many stories from such individuals I have met on the streets, on the bus, outside the grocery store, at the airport, and beyond...all emanating from sharing a smile and a simple, "Hi. How are you?"

What moves me to approach others in this manner? Perhaps it is about the hunger so many of us share...for greater meaning and purpose in life. Time and time again, these stories of others affirm two important aspects about life for me: those of little means share the most of themselves; and we are one, bound by our humanity.

Most recently, I was stopped at an intersection where a homeless man surrounded by a stack of books caught my eye. I lowered my window to greet him; his name was Richard. I asked what he was reading. He replied, "Shakespeare." I then asked about his favorite. Richard, as if on cue, responded, "Julius Caesar! 'It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves.'"

For Richard and the many others who have touched and brought meaning to my life with their stories, I celebrate Thanksgiving with much gratitude. Thank you.